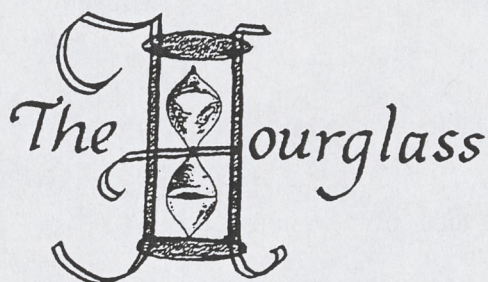


Historical Society of Palm Desert

P.O. Box 77

Palm Desert, CA 92261

(760) 346-6588



Community

Service

Collections

Archives

FALL/WINTER 1997

VOL. 5, NO. 3

BACK IN THE SADDLE AGAIN.....NEW VISTAS, A NEW SEASON

Society headquarters has been transformed!! Board members arriving for the first meeting after the summer hiatus were greeted by beautiful landscaping and a new flag in the front yard. Indoors there were newly installed exhibit cases and cabinets. Our sincere thank-you to the City of Palm Desert for making all this possible. Also, we'll keep you posted about the city's new Palm Desert history video project.

Thanks to Roger Keezer for "adopting" Fire Engine #1, overhauled in 1997, ready now for exhibit and to roll in parades. Licensing, insurance, additional signs, minor repairs, driving the engine to keep it in good running order..... Roger has been pursuing all these details. He's our hero! Roger and Dan Callahan are responsible for another new feature at the historic fire house.....an electric garage door opener has been installed in the bay, which houses the antique engine and the impressive new Search & Rescue vehicle. Roger is on the S & R team.

Guest, John Nagus, City Community Arts Manager, outlined plans for the 1998 City Art Walk. The lighting ceremony for the art walk titled "Off-Center" will take place on December 5 and the self-guided tour will run for a full year. Brochures will be available at City Hall, the Chamber of Commerce and the Society office. Be sure to enjoy the El Paseo Sculpture Experience.

Through efforts initiated by Society Executive Director, Doloris Driskel, John said the Historical Society will be included on the tour. Ann La Rose's bronze entitled "One on One", a portrayal of a boy playing tug-of-war with his dog, will find a permanent home at the Society fire house. You may remember that it was stolen from the 1993 El Paseo Exhibit. Through an anonymous tip to Crimestoppers, the thief was apprehended, the sculpture was recovered in Utah, and the city purchased it for their collection.

Welcome to New Members

Allan & Suzy Hurst

Loraine Vallat Meyer

Herbert & Sylvia Miller

Mary Noble

Patty Orsini

Bea Pierce

Jean W. Scofield

Dr. Peggy Steen

James & Gisela Sundahl

Ralph G. Zimmerman

Contributing Members

Jean Hollenbeck

Douglas & Sandy Keedy

Russ & Irma Marshall

Hal & Angela Rover

THANKS to Business Members for continuing support:

Gary L. Hopper, D.D.S.

Jean Martin Bookkeeping

Keedy's Fountain & Grill

Pomona First Federal

Roy Williams Carver/Carver Companies

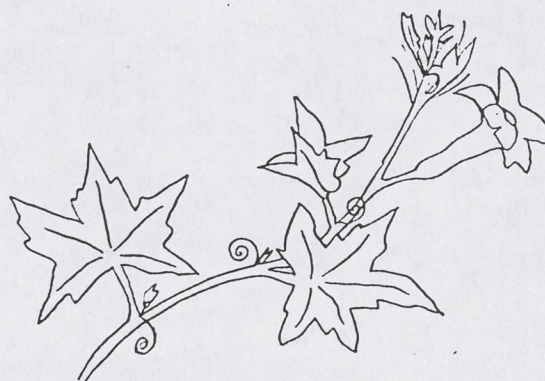
Shadow Mountain Resort & Racquet Club

Waste Management of the Desert

Landscaping, a Creative Art

Xeriscaping, conservation of water through creative landscaping, is an increasingly attractive and compelling concept in the desert. Everyone agrees that water is our most precious resource.

Kudos to Eric Johnson who did the design work, and to the landscape artists who sculpted the beds at Society headquarters. They have combined drought resistant plantings, artful concrete borders, gravel and giant boulders to make a stunning visual introduction out front for all to see. Our abundant thanks to the City and staff for producing the Historical Society's Gardens on El Paseo.



Ocotillo, beavertail cactus and other flowering plants were used, including Pink Fairy Duster (*Galliantra Eriophylla*), Katie (*Ruellia Brittoniana*), Littleleaf Cordia (*Cordia Parvifolia*), red Yucca (*Hesperoloe Parviflora*), and Tick Seed (*Coreopsis Lanceolata*). Tick Seed is more interesting than it sounds, and the other blossoms of purple, pink, red and the white clusters of the Cordia shrub blend like an artist's palette.

In past years Bob Keedy worked in cooperation with the Shadow Mountain Palette Club to set up art shows in the grassy area in front of the building. We think Bob would like the new desert garden. Perhaps an artist will come and paint the Old Fire Station?

A Remarkable Gift!

Records and blueprints of historic significance, office equipment and furnishings passed from the recently dissolved Palm Desert Property Owners Association to the Historical Society. Palm Desert's Public Works staff and vehicles accomplished this task on July 21.

The Palm Desert Property Owners Association played an important role in planning, developing covenants and restrictions, and creating an architectural review board for approving structures. It was concerned with the protection of values and rights of property owners in much of the area south of Highway 111 for Palm Desert's burgeoning community.

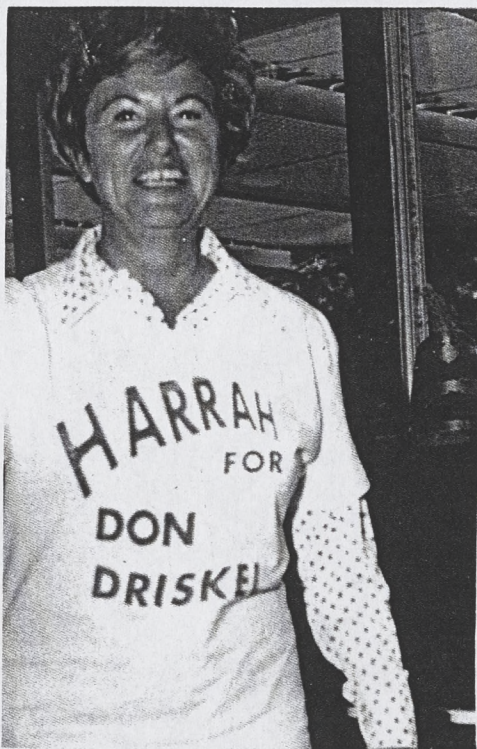
The reaction of Society members to the gift might be characterized as "exceedingly grateful, but overwhelmed." Ginny Folkers will be processing the business records for the archives. Lack of space at the historic fire house was a hindrance. We are very grateful to architects Bob Pitchford (on the P.D.P.O.A. review board since its inception) and Carl Cox for lending a helping hand to the Society by providing interim storage for the remaining blueprints.

Keedy's Fortieth Anniversary

Many thanks to Bob and Patty Downs and employees at Keedy's, who outdid themselves at the party on June 30. The spirit of the celebration continues throughout 1997! Everyone had a great time visiting and partaking of the full and delicious meal the Downs generously provided. A fringe benefit of this old-timer's fellowship was that the Society signed up several new members. Also, the pickle jar donations, which the Downs earmarked for the Society, totaled \$225.25. This will be added to the Bob Keedy memorial fund. Our best wishes to the Downs and to Keedy's for continued prosperity in the years ahead. Keedy's exemplifies the true spirit and hominess of a pioneer establishment.

An additional gift for the Bob Keedy fund has come from the McDougall family: Ann McDougall, Claire McDougall Doherty, Alex McDougall, and Nancy McDougall Leone.

DOLORIS DRISKEL
A Life of Joy and Service



Doloris Driskel, nee Johnson, was born in Kansas City, Missouri in 1924. Her early years were spent in Missouri and in Wichita, Kansas as the youngest in a family of four girls.

She moved from Wichita to Glendale, California during World War II. Eventually, she went to work as secretary to the station manager for TWA Airlines at the Lockheed air terminal in Burbank. A friend convinced her to become a flight attendant, so after attending training school in Kansas City, she was assigned to Lockheed. Most of her flying hours were spent in the 21-passenger DC3 and the 52-passenger Constellation.

Don Driskel was working as a hydraulic engineer on the "Connie." They met, married, and spent their July honeymoon in Palm Desert at the Green Palm Lodge. Don McNeilly Sr. owned the small white stucco lodge back then, which stood at the corner of Deep Canyon and Alessandro. The lodge was recently demolished and replaced by the handsome complex known as "Cam's Corner", with a Mobil Station and other shops. Doloris placed flowers on the site when the work began.

Being involved with Don's company, Haskel Engineering of Glendale, introduced Doloris to the great game of golf. They moved permanently to Palm Desert in October 1961. Because Don often filled in as a "fourth" playing with celebrities at Eldorado Country Club, they became friends with George and Alice Gobel. One year Don unsuccessfully ran for City Council, but he and George rode in the best golf cart entry with a sign reading "Even Spooky Old Alice Likes Don Driskel!" Doloris has been associated with the Golf Cart Parade for many years. When the theme was "Christmas in July," she and Don would appear as Mr. & Mrs. Santa Claus. Through the efforts of Andy Petlansky, the parade became an annual event.

The Driskel's three children, Dona, Diane and Doreen, attended elementary school in Palm Desert and high school in Indio. That meant involvement in scouting, band, softball (Pat Wilson was coach) and high school drama (Rod Bashore was coach.)

Don was active on the Palm Desert Board of Realtors. Along with Frank Goodman and George Berkey Sr., he was instrumental in promoting the building of the offices which now stand on Monterey Avenue. Doloris thoroughly enjoyed working on the Special Events Committee for the Board. Their first breakfast was held at the Living Desert, where all board members dressed in pajamas and served the food.

Over 20 years ago Mayor Ed Mullins appointed Doloris as a Commissioner on the Parks & Recreation Committee. She looks with pride at the Civic Center Park and Sports Complex, and she never misses a chance to say "Look at what Palm Desert has done."

Doloris currently holds the position of Executive Director on the board of the Historical Society. Her duties include promoting visibility and representing the Society's best interests.

All About Mini-Muster

Mayor Dick Kelly's proclamation of Fire Prevention Week in the City of Palm Desert heralds the annual return to local schools of the popular Mini-Muster program. It is a signature event sponsored by the Historical Society of Palm Desert with a committee headed by B.J. and Dan Callahan and with consultant/adviser Jan Holmlund.



This fire safety training for third graders teaches the children self-protection and prevention of fires. The program was adopted in 1993 as an educational, community outreach, related to the Society's purpose and to its occupancy of the historic building on El Paseo which was Palm Desert's first fire station.

Who makes it happen? Co-sponsors of Mini-Muster are the Desert Sands School District (the first district in southern California to implement M-M) and Fire Station #33 of the Riverside County Fire Department. Many thousands of volunteer hours contribute to the success of MM. Station #33 enthusiastically operates the field muster with the assistance of fire fighters from neighboring stations. Since 1993, over 2000 children have benefitted from this valuable safety training program.

When does it happen? Dates of MM 1997 were:

George Washington School	October 6
Abraham Lincoln School	October 7
Gerald Ford School	October 15

It is anticipated that James Carter School will participate in MM '98. Members of the committee look forward to working with Palm Desert's newest elementary school.

You're invited! MM '97 culminates at an awards ceremony at the Palm Desert City Council meeting on Thursday, November 13, at 7:00 p.m. Historical Society members are invited to attend. Society, school and fire department personnel will be honored. The Mayor will present an award to one child from each school, recognizing their artistic efforts in depicting a MM event. The art work will be on display in the lobby of the Council Chambers.

To honor the children especially, please try to come and see them receive their awards. A Chinese proverb expresses the beauty of the hands-on approach of MM:

"I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand."

Remembering Ed: More Memorial gifts for Ed Mullins since June 3

Jack & Bonnie Bowie
Dan & BJ Callahan
Doloris M. Driskel
Dick & Ginny Folkers
Jean Ann Hirschi
Mr. & Mrs. E. Clyde Hollenbeck

Jan Holmlund
Robert & Rheo Lawman
Nancy McDougall Leone
Edwin & Theda Lundquist
Florence L. Maxwell
Ann D. McDougall

Bob Mullins
Ginny Mullins
Eugene Roberts
Col. Sherman A. Smith
John & Gisela Sundahl

IN MEMORIAM

Angelina Briggs
Kenneth Eckert
Anne FitzGerrel

Mercedes Kittle
Lily Mae "Noonie" O'Rourke

Shirley O'Donnell
Richard Preble
Eugene Roberts

Historical Societies Support Each Other A Sentimental Journey with Del Sharbutt

The annual meeting of the Historical Society of Palm Desert was held October 22 at the Shadow Mountain Resort and Racquet Club. President Jean Hollenbeck opened the meeting with a tribute to Ed Mullins -- how we do miss him! She thanked Mary Safe for making the luncheon arrangements. On a motion from the floor to dispense with reading of the minutes and the treasurer's report, the program moved on to introductions.

Among the guests were: Ned and Cindy Millis, Ned is president of the La Quinta Historical Society; Art and Helen LaLonde, Art is president of the Coachella Valley Museum & Cultural Center; Sally McManus of the Palm Springs Historical Society was unable to attend. Other guests introduced were: Marian Henderson, Honorary Board Member; Jean Benson, Advisor to the board; and Mary Lou Noble, primary teacher recently retired from Lincoln School. Upon her retirement, Mary Lou received a complimentary membership in the Society.

Octogenarian, Del Sharbutt, was our speaker for the day. He is a national treasure! Born in Fort Worth, a minister's son, he grew up in small Texas towns like DeLeon, population 2190. There he absorbed the all-American values associated with rural life in the first half of the century.

Attending college during the Depression, Del supported himself by playing in a dance band and regularly fell asleep in his morning classes. The Dean advised him to lay out of school for a year, take a job, save money and then return to continue his law studies. He was promised scholarship assistance if he would follow that plan. Thus did fate and his marvelous voice steer Del into a job as a radio announcer. By 1934 he was working for the CBS Network in New York City, announcing for programs that featured band music around the clock. He joined A.S.C.A.P., being a composer as well as a performer. He lived on 52nd Street and maintained a fabulous life style mingling with well known musicians and literary types like Robert Benchley.....all on \$55 a week.

This was before he pitched his well-known Campbell Soup jingle, "M--M--Good" to the C.E.O. of the company. The rest, as they say, is history. Del achieved national recognition from his years of doing commercials for the Campbell Soup Company.

His thumb nail history of broadcasting and of his personal life experiences, including retirement 20 years ago in Palm Desert, was indeed a sentimental journey. Del credited Dr. Joe Cruze of Eisenhower Medical Center for bringing him to the desert to help with a 13-week promotion for the hospital. Also, he gave affectionate thanks to the late Ed Mullins whose enthusiasm persuaded him to settle in Palm Desert. With his wit, wisdom and humor, he had every person in the room completely captivated. His endearing and enduring personality has enriched the desert immeasurably by his generous community participation.

For a fitting finale, Del resurrected one of his own compositions from the piano bench and gave a recitative of "Window on Main Street." Thanks, Del, you are the Norman Rockwell of sheet music. We love you!

Golf Cart Parade - Remember Nov. 9!

Doloris Driskel tells us that Fire Engine #1 has been given permission to bring up the rear of the Golf Cart Parade. It's a special dispensation, since no way can it be disguised as a golf cart; however, shades of "Christmas in July"--there will be Mr. & Mrs. Santa Claus. SEE YOU THERE!

History Catches Up with Itself

We have several former service women in the Historical Society ranks. Among them are Willa Ruth McKell, Jean Benson and Jan Holmlund. Last month there was a memorial dedication for Women in Military Service in Washington, D.C. As a special tribute, a commemorative postage stamp now bears the faces of five service women.

In September Willa Ruth and her husband, Marty (retired head of C.O.D.'s Business Dept.) were thrilled to be packing their bags to attend the gala 4-day celebration in our nation's capitol. The event included formal affairs, reunions, a service luncheon, dedication ceremony and a candlelight memorial march. Willa Ruth served as a Navy Wave from 1943-46. After training at Hunter's Point, NYU and the University of Indiana in Bloomington, she was at the Naval Air Station in Pasco, Washington for eleven months before being shipped overseas with the first group of Waves. Their small group was stationed on the windward side of Honolulu at Kenohoe Air Station. She has wonderful memories of duty as the Storekeeper and in the Pay Office. She earned a salute!

The McKells are charter members of our Society. They have been active and giving members of the community for many years. Their talents are well known and we look forward to having them present a program for the membership.

Input from Membership is Invited

The Nominating Committee is charged with presenting a slate before April for Fall elections. Members of the Committee are: Jean Benson, Chairperson; Gary Olesen; Theda Lundquist; Jean Martin and Doloris Driskel. Please let any one of them know your suggestions for board service or call the office at 346-6588.

"Hourglass" Editor, Theda Lundquist

Historical Society of Palm Desert
P. O. Box 77
Palm Desert, CA 92261

Mrs. M. Charles B. [redacted]
74 [redacted] Borrego Drive
Palm Desert, CA 92260